

C. Remarks

In the office action, claims 1-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Based on the comments that follow, reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

D.1. Descriptions and Differences of the Claims from the Cited Art:**Independent Claim 1 and Claims 2-15**

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a query term recognizer that examines the query terms and identifies and automatically groups query terms that are intended as a phrase. The cited art of Bailey does not disclose or suggest automatically grouping query terms that are intended as a phrase. The cited paragraph [0128] of Bailey merely discloses displaying the top-level matches on the search results page. Moreover, the cited paragraph [0128] although disclosing a grouped set of terms “Mark Twain”, such grouping is provided by the user through the use of the quotation marks. Further, the cited paragraph [0167] of Bailey merely discloses dividing the query phrase into multiple single-term queries, if no search results are found in case of multiple-term queries. The single-term queries are then run to generate possible results. More specifically, paragraph [0167], lines 4-8, “*...will normally generate results if all four terms are associated with a single item...*” of Bailey merely teaches that the results include individual items that are associated with all the terms of the query. Applicants are unable to find, in the cited art, any teach or suggestion of automatic grouping of

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the query terms that are intended as a phrase and searching them accordingly.

Claim 1 further recites a query type recognizer that examines the query terms and categorizes the query as one of a plurality of query types. Bailey does not disclose or suggest categorizing the query as one of a plurality of query types. The cited paragraph [0127] of Bailey merely discloses returning only those items that have entries under all the individual query terms, in case of queries with multiple terms. As a result, the items in the database are categorized as popular or 'not' popular, but does not teach or suggest a query type recognizer that categorized the query as one of a plurality of query types. Further, the cited paragraph [131] of Bailey merely discloses categorization of products under various categories. Moreover, a user manually selects a product category. Accordingly, a selection of appropriate databases for running the query is made. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art does not teach or suggest categorizing the query into query types.

Claim 1 also recites a query modifier that modifies the user entered query based on the term grouping determined by the query term recognizer and the query type determined by the query type recognizer. As noted above, the cited art of Bailey does not teach or suggest either a query term recognizer or a query type recognizer, and as such cannot teach or suggest a query modifier that modifies the user entered query based on the term grouping determined by the query term recognizer and the query type determined by the query type

recognizer as recited in claim 1. The cited paragraph [0037] of Bailey merely discloses assigning a numerical score to each web page, not the user query, based on the likelihood that the page offers a product for sale. The cited paragraph [0046] of Bailey discloses substituting a correctly spelled term in case of spelling errors in the query. Such correction of spelling is not based on the term grouping determined by the query term recognizer nor the query type determined by the query type recognizer. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art does not teach or suggest modifying the query on the basis of term grouping and/or query type.

Thus, Bailey does not teach or suggest the features of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that claim 1 distinguishes over the cited art and the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claims 2-15 depend from claim 1, and thus are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claim 4 further recites a query term list that maps possible query terms to other terms with which they are often grouped and wherein the query term recognizer refers to the query term list to identify and group terms as phrases. The cited paragraph [0046] of Bailey merely discloses carrying out a spell check, in case no search result is found, and replacing misspelled terms with correct terms. Further, the cited paragraph [0127] of Bailey merely discloses returning items having an entry under all individual terms of a query. Bailey does not

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disclose or suggest maintaining a query term list that can be used to identify and group query terms phrases. The cited portions of Bailey do not teach or suggest any grouping of terms as a phrase. Thus, Bailey does not teach or suggest the features of claim 4. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that claim 4 distinguishes over the cited art and the rejection of claim 4 be withdrawn.

Claim 6 further recites a local pattern recognizer that identifies query terms that identify the query as a local query seeking information related to a specific geographic region from which the query originated. The cited paragraphs [0166] and [0167] of Bailey merely disclose spell checking the query, if no results are returned; further, if no results are returned for the query modified after the spell check, then the query is broken down into single term queries and run again. Bailey does not teach or suggest identifying a query as a local query related to a specific geographic region. Thus, Bailey does not teach or suggest the features of claim 6. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that claim 6 distinguishes over the cited art and the rejection of claim 6 be withdrawn.

The Examiner indicates that claims 16-41 are similar in scope to claims 1-13. Applicants note that the recited claim features of independent claims 16, 27, and 35 differ from claim 1.

Claim 16

Specifically, independent claim 16 recites automatically classifying the query as one of a set of query categories by selecting one of a set of query

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categories based on the presence of query terms and context information. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Bailey does not teach or suggest classifying the query, but rather discusses classifying the items to be searched, e.g., by either product type or popularity. Moreover, even were selecting a particular product database considered ‘classifying’, claim 16 has been amended to indicate that classifying occurs automatically. In Bailey, selection of a particular product database is provided by the user and is not selected automatically.

Claim 16 also recites automatically modifying the query to include the query category. Again, Bailey does not teach or suggest including any query type in the query itself. Moreover, even were a user selection of a product database to be searched considered a ‘query category’, such selection of a product database is not automatic since it is performed by the user in forming the query.

Thus, Bailey does not teach or suggest the features of claim 16. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that claim 16 distinguishes over the cited art and the rejection of claim 16 be withdrawn.

Claims 17-26 depend from claim 16, and thus are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claim 27

Independent claim 27 recites examining the query terms and automatically grouping terms that are intended as a phrase based on the gathered context. As

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noted above with respect to claim 1, Bailey does not teach or suggest automatically grouping terms, much less automatically grouping terms that are intended as a phrase based on the gathered context.

Claim 27 also recites examining the query terms and automatically categorizing the query as one of a plurality of query types based on the gathered context. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Bailey does not teach or suggest categorizing the query, but rather categorizes the products to be searched based on product type or popularity. Moreover, even were a product type to be searched considered a query type, such selection in Bailey is not performed automatically, but rather by the user.

Claim 27 also recites modifying the user entered query based on the term grouping and query type. As noted above, Bailey does not teach or suggest either determining a term grouping or a query type. As such, Bailey cannot teach or suggest modifying the query based on the term grouping and the query type. Moreover, assuming without agreeing that the user provided quotation marks are considered a term grouping and the selection of a product database a query type, the disclosed correction of misspellings in Bailey is not based in whole or in part on either the quotation marked phrase or the particular selected product database. As such, Bailey does not teach or suggest modifying the user entered query based on the term grouping and query type as recited in claim 27.

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Thus, Bailey does not teach or suggest the features of claim 27.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that claim 27 distinguishes over the cited art and the rejection of claim 27 be withdrawn.

Claims 28-34 depend from claim 27, and thus are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claim 35

Independent claim 35 recites means for classifying the query as one of a set of query categories by selecting one of a set of query categories based on the presence of query terms and context information. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Bailey does not teach or suggest classifying the query, but rather discusses classifying the items to be searched, e.g., by either product type or popularity. Moreover, even were selecting a particular product database considered 'classifying', claim 35 has been amended to indicate that classifying occurs by automatically selecting one of a set of query categories. In Bailey, selection of a particular product database is provided by the user and is not selected automatically.

Claim 35 also recites means for automatically modifying the query to include the query category. Again, Bailey does not teach or suggest including any query type in the query itself. Moreover, even were a user selection of a product database to be searched considered a 'query category', such selection of a product database is not automatic since it is performed by the user in forming

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the query.

Thus, Bailey does not teach or suggest the features of claim 35.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that claim 35 distinguishes over the cited art and the rejection of claim 35 be withdrawn.

Claims 36-41 depend from claim 35, and thus are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

D.2. Conclusion

The claims have been argued to highlight the distinctions of the recited invention over the cited art, and in view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are now clearly patentable over the cited art, and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Reconsideration and reexamination of the present application is requested. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the pending claims be allowed. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this matter, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at the numbers listed below, prior to issuing a further Office Action.

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If there is a fee occasioned by this response, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463.

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